FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
20-116A	ORLEANS		EAS.45

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*:
South Eastham

Address: 100 Old State Highway

Historic Name: Smith – Walker – Nickerson House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1855

Source: deeds, vital records, censuses

Style/Form: Greek Revival/crosswing

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: stone

Wall/Trim: wood clapboard & wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
Enclosed porch on wing added, mid 20th c.
One-story addition on rear, late 20th c.
Window sash replaced

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

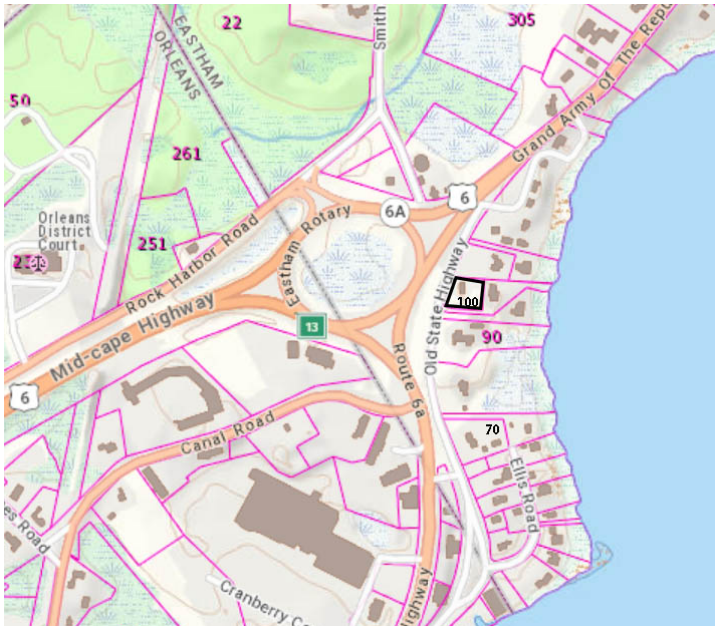
Acreage: 0.46

Setting: The property is situated in a compromised location on a short section of the Old State Highway sandwiched between Route 6A (and the Orleans town line) and the Town Cove with the Eastham Rotary nearby.

Photograph

View from NW.

Locus Map (north at top)



Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Smith – Walker - Nickerson House, built ca. 1855, is a story-and-a-half wood frame single dwelling with a cross-wing plan composed of a front-gable house section with a three-bay façade framed by corner pilasters and a substantial entablature along the raking eaves. The off-center entrance has sidelights and is set within a trabeated architrave. The north side of the house contains two windows and an entablature with a pronounced frieze that makes a short return on the front above the corner pilaster. The wing is attached to the house recessed behind its front wall fronted by a later enclosed porch. Within is a three-bay façade with an entrance offset to the house side. The fronts of both sections are sided with clapboards while the sides and rear are covered with wood shingles. Two pairs of windows have been added to the first story of the south end of the wing; a single attic window is centered in the gable. A one-story ell attached to the rear of the wing is a recent addition.

The house is sited in the northwest corner of a half-acre lot set back from the street behind a yard with mature plantings. A driveway enters the south side of the frontage. Houses built on lots subdivided from the property now occupy the space between the house and Town Cove.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Local historians call the house at 100 Old State Highway the Richard Smith House, and deeds can be traced definitively only to March 1864 when Richard Smith sold the 100 Old State Highway house and one acre to James Smith for $500. The 1858 map of Eastham associates the property with Richard Smith Jr. (1820-1911) a mariner. Whether he owned the house at that time is questionable. He was son of Eastham farmer Richard Smith (1780-1868) and his wife Phebe (1791-1879); the Smiths were very populous in South Eastham, and the precise location of Richard and Phebe Smith's homestead has yet to be identified. In 1843 the younger Richard Smith married Achsah Snow Crosby (1822-1903), daughter of Francis and Mercy Crosby of Eastham, and in 1850 they were sharing a house in Eastham with the family of Lewis Smith, also a mariner along with his fifteen-year-old son Daniel. Richard Smith Sr. was the next enumerated; Myrick Smith, who lived at 60 Old State Highway (EAS.43) preceded him. Richard and Ashsah Smith's eldest daughter, Ashsah was a year old at the time. Richard and Ashsah Smith with daughters Ashsah and Caroline were enumerated after Myrick Smith and his son Heman in the 1855 census. The Smiths apparently divorced in 1860 with Ashsah marrying Elkanah C. Brackett that same year and Richard, it would seem, moving to Chatham. In 1864 his father sold the house to distant cousin James Smith. If the son ever owned the 100 Old State Highway property, he may have conveyed title to his father after his divorce.[1]

James Smith sold the house and one acre at 100 Old State Highway a year-and-a-half later to John F. Walker for $700, but he remained in this neighborhood, probably set back from the west side of State Highway.[2] Born in 1841, John F. Walker was the son of farmer John Walker (1808-84) and his wife Hannah Linnell Walker (1805-78) and had grown up just north of 100 Old State Highway on the west side of the road. His grandfather was Peter Walker (1764-by April 1837), who had lived in Eastham since at least 1790. In 1863 John F. Walker was a mariner when he married Mary Ellen Eldridge of Chatham, and their son Abbott H. Walker was born in September 1864. The 1870 census shows Walker with $875 in real property, and by then he and his wife had had a daughter, Celia H. The 1880 census describes Walker as a fisherman, and in 1880 he and his family shared the 100 Old State Highway house with carpenter Richard Myrick, his wife Paulina Sparrow (daughter of Samuel and Mary Sparrow of 90 Old State Highway), and their son Raymond.

In 1900 and 1910 John F. and Mary Walker were alone at 100 Old State Highway, and in 1902 they were taxed on a house valued at $700, a barn at $200, henhouses at $30, 21.5 acres, and 197 fowl. Mary Eldridge Walker died in 1916, and in 1920

[1] Richard Smith to James Smith, 5 March 1864, BCD 90:417. The August 1995 MHC building form for 100 Old State Highway states that whether Richard Smith Sr. or his son and namesake deeded the property to James Smith is unclear, but the deed documented that the grantor's wife was Phebe (Ryder), the second wife of Richard Smith Sr.
[2] James Smith to John F. Walker, 20 November 1865, 90:33. The 1884 Eastham map shows "J. Smith" with a house in back (west) of S. Freeman, probably Sylvanus Freeman, who had lived with his wife Sarah in the James Smith household in 1860.

John F. Walker is listed as a truck farmer living alone. He died in 1922, and two years later his children Abbott and Celia sold the house and three acres to Otto E. Nickerson.[3]

Born in Orleans in 1896, Otto Eli Nickerson was the longtime teaching principal of Eastham Grammar School and the son of Abbott C. and Laura M. Higgins Nickerson; his father was a farmer. He attended Harwich Agricultural School, and in 1915 the Yarmouth Register included the records of the ten students who had completed the year at that school:

> Otto Nickerson, age 18, travelled nine miles per day by man power and eighteen miles by rail; did his class room studies; made $473.01 from his garden and sixty-five hens; earned $228.00 in other ways; and closed his account with a credit of $701.01.[4]

Otto Nickerson went on to Hyannis Normal School in 1916, and by 1920 he was teaching in Eastham and boarding in the home of Carrie Holbrook on Nauset Road. He taught in Eastham for three or four years and then took positions in North Andover, West Newton, and Quincy before returning to Eastham by March 1925, by which time he had married his wife Albina. He was principal of Eastham Grammar School and taught its sixth- through eighth-graders from the late 1920s until he retired, and he was active in such major town events as Old Home Week and the tercentenary celebration. By 1935 he and his wife spent their summers at Camp Farley, founded in 1934 in Mashpee as a 4-H summer camp, and rented out the 100 Old State Highway house for the season. By 1938 Otto Nickerson was Camp Farley's director, and Albina Nickerson was its dietician. Otto Nickerson ran a 4-H club in Eastham, two conservation clubs at Eastham Grammar School, and marched the school's students to decorate veterans' graves at Eastham's Evergreen Cemetery from 1919 on. During World War II he took the students out to fish in Town Cove every Friday to provide fish for the the school's noon meal; on one Friday in October 1943 the female students caught thirty-five flounder.[5]

The 1930 census lists Nickerson and his wife on State Highway with their four-year-old daughter Jocelyn; by 1940 the couple had a son, Thomas (born 1924), and Jocelyn was working as a school cafeteria waitress. Nickerson retired by 1964. Albina Nickerson died in 1974, and Otto died in 1984. A year later his son sold 100 Old State Highway to the Preservation Advocacy Trust, which sold it to Salt Marsh Trust twelve days later. In November of the same year Cape Ventures Limited Realty Trust acquired the property, and in July 1986 that trust sold 100 Old State Highway to Joseph H. and Robert J. Langway of Millbury.[6] The Langways owned it until 1995. In 2002 Karen and Louis J. Dellacagna of South Salem, New York, bought 100 Old State Highway, and Louis Dellacagna alone has been the owner since 2012.[7]

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Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.

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[3] Abbott H. Walker, Eastham, and Celia H. Crosby, Orleans, to Otto E. Nickerson, 5 July 1924, BCD 392:321.
[4] "Harwich Agricultural School," *Yarmouth Register*, 30 January 1915, 5.
[5] On Nickerson see "South Orleans," *Hyannis Patriot*, 18 September 1916, 4; "Orleans," *Yarmouth Register*, 11 September 1920, 5; ibid., 17 September 1921, 5, and 15 October 1943, 1; *Barnstable Patriot*, 18 September 1922, 4; *Hyannis Patriot*, 10 January 1929, 4; 11 July 1935, 6; 16 September 1937, 10; and 28 April 1938, 13. See also Donald B. Sparrow, *Growing Up on Cape Cod: Four Brothers Learning to Stand Tall* (Eastham, MA: Great Oaks Publishing Co., 1999), 86-87.
[6] Otto Nickerson obituary in *Barnstable Patriot*, 27 September 1984, 6; Otto E. Nickerson to Otto E. and Albina H. Nickerson, 19 September 1955, BCD 923:171; Thomas B. Nickerson, South Orleans, executor will Otto E. Nickerson, to David B. Willard, trustee Preservation Advocacy Trust, 12 June 1985, BCD 4576:188; David H. Willard, trustee Preservation Advocacy Trust, Orleans, to Laurence J. Casale, trustee Salt Marsh Trust, 24 June 1985, BCD 4612:282; Laurence J. Casale, trustee Salt Marsh Trust, to Robert M. Sequin, trustee Cape Ventures Limited Realty Trust, 15 November 1985, BCD 4804:144; Robert M. Sequin, trustee Cape Ventures Limited Realty Trust, Chatham, to Joseph H. Langway and Robert J. Langway, Millbury, 1 July 1986, BCD 5170:133.
[7] Paul D. and Donna B. Moskwa, Stratford CT, to Karen and Louis J. Dellacagna, South Salem, NY, 25 September 2000, BCD 13258:297; Karen Ruggiero, South Salem NY, to Louis J. Dellacagna, Greenwich CT, 12 September 2012, BCD 26673:188. The house and garage are shown on Lot 1A of "Subdivision Plan of Land in Eastham, Massachusetts Prepared for Preservation Advocacy Trust," 29 May 1985, BCP 399:88.

Continuation sheet 2

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MAPS

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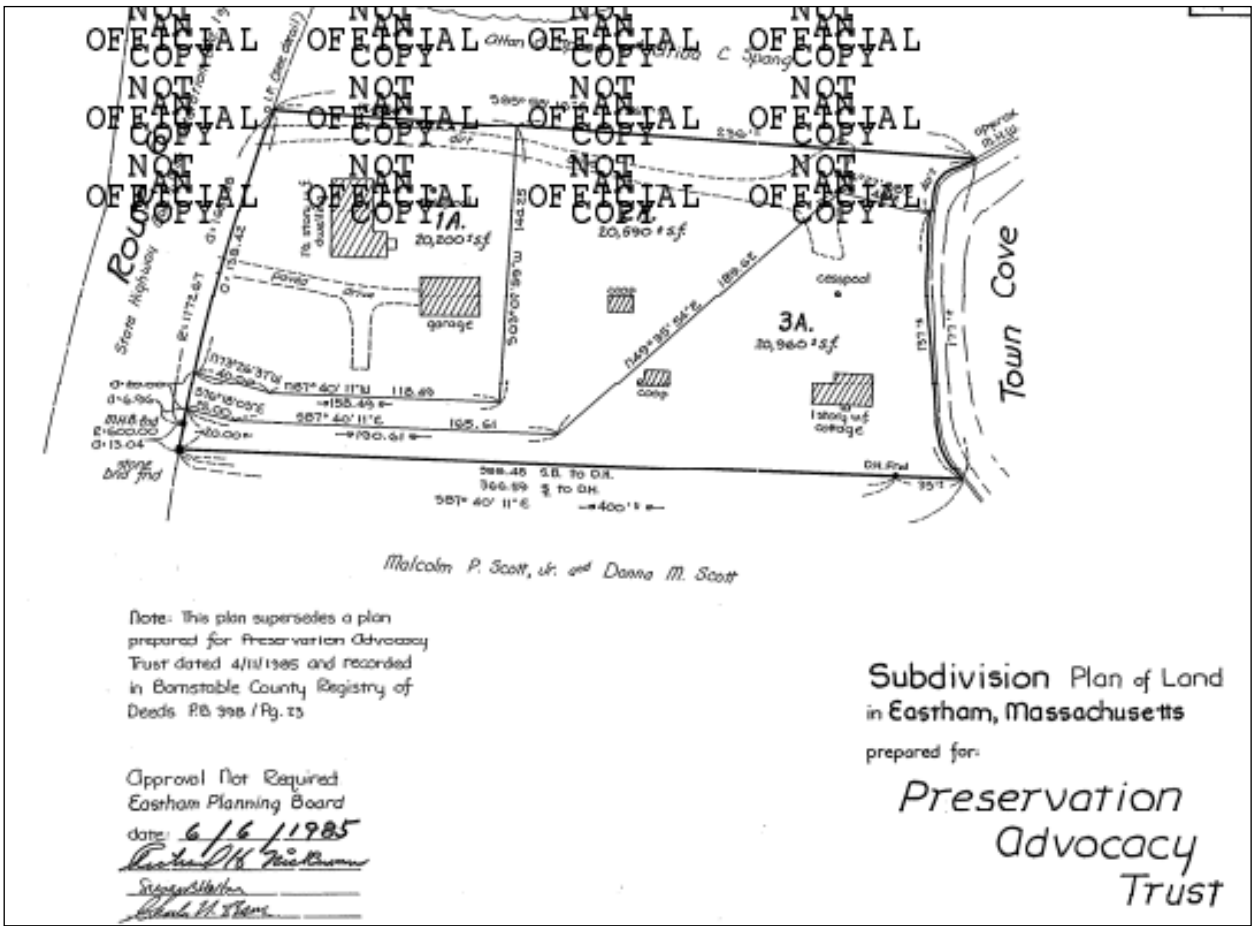
SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



The 100 Old State Highway house and a garage (now gone) were on a 0.46-acre lot in this 1985 subdivision plan (BCP 399:88).

PHOTOGRAPHS

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

View from SW.